

**Legislative Task Force Meeting
Mentor Assistance Program
State Department of Education
165 Capitol Avenue
5th Floor North Mechanical Room
October 27, 2008
1:00-4:00 P.M.**

AGENDA

A. Welcome, Introductions

B. Approval of Minutes

C. Workshop

1. Development of Guiding Principles
2. Discussion of Annual Budget for BEST
3. Review of Various Models

D. Discussion

(Break)

E. Building a Prototype

1. Review of Components
2. Matching Components to Guiding Principles and Budget

F. Next Steps

G. Adjourn

LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE MEETING MENTOR ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

October 17, 2008

1:00 p.m.

Legislative Office Building, Room 1B
Hartford, CT

MINUTES

Members Present

Mark McQuillan, Chairperson; Stephanie Shulder-Littrell, Mary Cortright, Janis Hochadel, Mary Loftus Levine, Maureen Ruby, Dale Bernardoni, Glenn Iannaccone, Catherine Carbone, Richard Schwab, Paul Paese, David Cicarella, Denise Rose and Representative Mary Mushinsky.

Members Absent

Representative Andrew Fleischman, Senator Thomas Gaffey, Senator Thomas Herlihy, Representative Debralee Hovey, Senator Edward Meyer, and Senator John Kissell.

Overview of Meeting Agenda

Commissioner McQuillan welcomed the Task Force. He announced that we would be hearing presentations from Danbury, Fairfield and the Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs). He also distributed letters for consideration by the Task Force written by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) and from the Connecticut State University System (CSU). After opening comments by members of the Task Force, the minutes from the October 10, 2008, meeting were approved by all members.

Commissioner McQuillan proposed that after the three presentations the Task Force could discuss the possibility of putting together a work group composed of four or five members who would meet over a two week period to put into place a basic structure of a plan.

Presentation by the Fairfield Public Schools

Dale Bernadoni introduced Margaret Mary Fitzgerald, Assistant Superintendent and Joan Lowney, BEST District Facilitator for Fairfield who presented their induction program for beginning teachers. The Fairfield induction program creates a two-pronged support system which provides both “psycho-physical” support to promote a sense of belonging as well as system of professional development aligned with the Common Core of Teaching (CCT) and related to student learning. Features of the program include: mentor matches for each beginning teacher, monthly meetings, the assignment of a portfolio support person to each second year teacher, training of mentors in-district, support logs kept by the beginning teacher and mentor which are used to encourage conversation and the practice of reflection, and two days of release time for both mentors and beginning teachers to observe each others’ teaching and to promote conversations regarding their teaching and their students’ learning. In addition to mentors – administrators, portfolio scorers and master mentors are all involved in contributing to the support system. Details regarding the Fairfield presentation were described through a power point presentation, copies of which were distributed to the Task force. Discussion followed the presentation through a question and answer period.

Presentation by the Danbury Public Schools

Mary Loftus Levine introduced Irene Mlynar, a teacher from Broadview Middle School, who presented Danbury's BEST Support Plan. Through a grant provided by the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) and significant contributions in training and guidance from RESC staff at Education Connection, Danbury has designed a comprehensive system of support for its new teachers. Features of Danbury's Support Action Plan for Beginning Teachers (copies distributed to the Task Force) include: a careful recruitment process of mentors, beginning teacher orientations, bi-monthly meetings with mentors and support team members, release time for workshops and BT/mentor observations, documentation of mentor meetings, the involvement of administrators in the support system, a clear outline of mentor responsibilities for providing support, professional development for mentors including in-district trainings to keep them updated, and continued feedback on how their program is working.

Discussion followed both of these presentations and both districts agreed that lack of time was the most significant issue to deal with in designing a support program. Both districts have been creative in getting release time scheduled into their programs by scheduling common planning times and reducing supplemental duty assignments for beginning teachers.

Presentation by the RESC Alliance

Paula Colen, Executive Director of EASTCONN, introduced Nancy Celentano, Director of Training, EASTCONN and Lyn Nevins, BEST Field Staff for Cooperative Educational Services (CES). Nancy and Lyn presented *Mentoring and Beyond: A RESC Perspective*. Details regarding the RESC presentation were described through a power point presentation, copies of which were distributed to the Task Force. Discussion followed the presentation through a question and answer period.

Next Steps

Commissioner McQuillan proposed that a smaller work group be established to brainstorm the details of a new plan based on elements of the presentations that have been made to the Task Force over the past few weeks. However, the members of the Task Force decided to continue working as one group. A request was made to change the environment of the meetings to make it more conducive to getting down to work with chart paper, markers, etc. Commissioner McQuillan agreed that this was a good idea and volunteered to work on synthesizing components of the various proposals and to find an alternative meeting location where the Task Force members could work.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 27. The meeting site will be announced when known.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beverly Hartstone